



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE March 3, 2008

Ardell A. Wilson, D.D.S., M.P.H., Office of Oral Health (860) 509-8203

House Bill 5706 - An Act Concerning the Placement of Identifying Marks on Dental Prostheses

The Department of Public Health supports House Bill 5706.

The intent of this act is to require dentists licensed in this state to offer their patients the application or implanting of identifying marks on their removable prosthetic denture, bridge, or other structure to be worn in a person's mouth at the time it is being fabricated. This act would ensure that individuals in need of dentures or other removable prostheses will be made aware of the opportunity to permanently identify their prostheses.

These prostheses are necessary to ensure mastication (chewing) of food, retention of proper facial structure, proper enunciation of words and for esthetic purposes as well. All of these elements are necessary for an individual to gain proper nutrition and maintain self-esteem.

The Connecticut Task Force on Oral Health for Older Adults, which consisted of representatives from Long Term Care (LTC) facilities, Connecticut State Long Term Care Ombudsman Office, Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit Providers For the Aging (CANPFA), and others, identified lost or misplaced dentures as a extremely significant and common problem in the population that resides in Long term care facilities. Without any form of identification on these dentures, LTC staff have no way of knowing which dentures belong to whom. Many residents are not able to replace these dentures for financial reasons or insurance limitations. This leads to poor nutritional intake, as well as poor self-image and inhibited communications. This Task Force identified labeling dentures as an effective strategy to improve and maintain the oral health of older adults who require removable prostheses.

In addition to these benefits already identified in favor of labeling removable prostheses, the identification of victims in mass disasters would be enhanced with these identifying marks. In fact, the American Dental Association has policy (1979:637) which urges constituent societies to actively support the use of uniform methods of marking dental prostheses for forensic identification purposes.

To date, 22 other states require dentists to place identifying marks on dentures. The list of these states could be made available upon request.

It should be noted, that the placement of identifying marks can be placed on removable prostheses after they have been fabricated as well.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

Phone:



Telephone Device for the Deaf: (860) 509-7191
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # _____
P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134
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